

Phoenix e-Newsletter

Special Valentine's Day Issue
February 2013

Volume 1, Issue 3

*L*etters
to the
*B*eloved.



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Issue #3

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Wherefore Art Thou Love?

Alyssa Capriglione
pg. 3

He Is

Tazmin Uddin
pg. 4

Romancing Sorrow

Amelia Ellis
pg. 5

Loss of Love

Regina Alvarado
pg. 6

I Just Want to Be

Nacre Coleman
pg. 6

How to Love Like Young Werther

Amelia Ellis
pg. 6

A Love Affair with Old Hollywood Films

Genevieve Fleckenstein
pg. 7

Young Love

Nacre Coleman
pg. 8

How I See It

Amelia Ellis
pg. 8

Food for Thought

Shiyon Mathew
pg. 9

Upcoming CNR/Westchester County & NYC Literary Events

pg. 9

Wherefore Art Thou Love?

Alyssa Capriglione

As the month of February nears, I am flooded with a myriad of thoughts pertaining to lost love. I think of the mistakes, blunders, and oversights I have made in my past, and all at once it becomes hard to breathe. My lungs stiffen with the feelings of unrequited love, emotions that have managed to plague my existence for what seems like an eternity. Though these are thoughts that I have carried with me on my back, in my heart, and on my sleeve every single day, they become particularly intense and cumbersome in the month of February. I walk through any and every supermarket, drug store, and convenience mart, and I am bombarded by a hectic display of red and pink paper hearts hanging from lighting fixtures so it appears as if the heavens themselves are illuminating them and trying to send me a less than subliminal message. This message is one that echoes the loneliness within me.

There are nights when sleep eludes me and I lay awake with my mind inundated with thought. It is these nights that I stare at the Beatles quote strewn across a wall in my bedroom and I think, "What if they're right?" If the Beatles were correct in singing all you need is love, is it safe to say that a life without love is a life unlived? This thought unfolds and I recall the love letters of William Shakespeare, Ludwig van Beethoven, and Voltaire, and I am overwhelmed by the question of whether those types of love still exist; those earth shattering, soul stirring, heart aching kinds of love, the kind of love that keeps you awake each night thinking about the facets of that person's smile. These thoughts are almost too much to bear and I eventually fall into a wakeless sleep, much like the sleep I am

currently living in.

Though I try to put the notion of love out of my mind completely, it somehow manages to find its way back in, seeping through my pores until it is absorbed into my very being. It is inescapable. I cannot run from it anymore and it seems that I no longer have the will to do so—I succumb to love completely. I immerse myself in Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. These sonnets tell me: "that in black ink my love may still shine bright," while also telling me: "for sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds; lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds."

I am more perplexed than I was before. If love is so boundless and profound, why does it hurt so much? And why does it seem 21st century love is simply not as philosophically consuming as Shakespearean love? In an age when love letters teeming with emotional depth have been replaced with text messages teeming with acronyms and emoticons, are the sentiments the same? This is a question for which I have no answer.

Despite my bewilderment as to what the future holds, there is one thing that I do possess: hope. I am hopeful that my patience and willingness to believe in love will eventually lead me towards a love of purity and transcendence. Until then, I actively choose a life of hopeful days, sleepless nights, and the warm words of William Shakespeare.

Sonnet XCIV

They that have power to hurt, and will do none,
That do not do the thing the most do show,
Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,
Unmoved, cold and to temptation slow;
They nightly do inherit heaven's graces,
And husband nature's riches from expenses;
They are the lords and owner of their faces,
Others, but stewards of their excellence.
The summer's flower is to the summer sweet.
Though itself, it only live and die,
But if that flower with base infection meet,
The basest weed outbraves his dignity:
For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.

William Shakespeare

He Is

by Tazmin H. Uddin

When he entered my life, I can't remember
But he's with me January through December
He's with me through every season,
With me even without reason
He stands by me in changing weather
And helps me improve as a person and become better.
He's with me in the heat and the cold
And to him I believe, my soul has been sold
He calls me to all that is good
Improving my dress and attitude
He's with me through thick and thin
Reminding me that true beauty comes from within.
He never utters a word
Even when others call him absurd
And it pains me when one glance of him fills people with hate
And I know they say love is blind but for me it's too late
I don't care what others think or want
I'll remain loyal to him through every glare and taunt.
He is my shield and protector
My very own knight in shining armor.
When I think of him, my heart begins to smile
And I know every obstacle I face is worthwhile
He's always there for me
And sometimes I wish people could see what I see.
He is a reminder to always do my best
He reminds me to be gentle and modest
He is the constant that helps me stay grounded
Reminds me of the pillars, upon which my faith was founded.
He reminds others not to judge me by how I look
And tells the world I'm following the command of a Holy Book.
He reminds me to judge based on action
And reminds me to fulfill every obligation.
He demands that I put my best self forth
And values me enough to let me know my worth
I hope people respect the choice I've made
My love for him will never fade
And I hope people will let me be
In his presence, I truly feel free.
He is my hijab and if you didn't know, now you do
He's my first love, seriously it's true
And now that my hijab has been personified,
Every glimpse of him fills my heart with comforting pride.
When he's with me, I feel the blessings fall in this world and the hereafter
And with him I choose to remain now and forever.

Romancing Sorrow

by Amelia Ellis

1

I have not wandered from your heart.
So how am I to ease your grief
When shudder, toil, and fierce rampart
Now holds me from your tender peace?

Have I once spoken a foul word
To bring about thoughts so brittle
That make you think my heart absurd?
Think you think I care so little?

And with what mouth and with what haste
You do not grant me recompense
Have I not tried, have you no taste
To let me prove my heart makes sense?

But I'll respect your bonds and trust.
If gone you wish, then go I must.

2

I saw a mourning white as snow
And black tears of melancholy
Look, my lamb, innocence does know
A most woesome, grievous folly.

See, her face is so pale and lined
From aching, swelling, and bleeding;
A baby boy is born malign
There is no cure for her grieving.

And what is missing, don't you see,
Not joy, Heaven, or family
It is the man who had been freed
Now hear her cry, "Bring him to me."

Though this, her heart, had left him broke,
He has made her the bigger joke.

3

A frosted diamond I carry
It's in my pocket safe and sound
In hopes the lady I marry
Is close by waiting to be found

But found under stone, that is her
Who once held my love in her hand
Gods bring her back, how I suffer!
Make Time gently turn back his sands.

So old I have aged in reason;
Her romance had once made me feel.
But me, I'm afraid Death has seasoned,
This diamond does now look like steel.

When I die, and be it quite soon,
Sorrow ends; Death make us immune!

Loss of Love

Regina Alvarado

I see your face, you say to me farewell.
But why, my love, must thou reject me so?
You walk and leave me here alone to dwell.
My worth, I question, as I see you go.
We were as happy as two lovers dare to be.
Do I deserve this cruel treatment from thee?



I Just Want to Be

by Nacre Coleman

To you I am that piece of chocolate
That your diet restricts.
When you're craving something sweet
And in secret, I am eaten anyway.

I believe I am that glass of ice cold water
That your body desires when you thirst.
When your mouth is parched, throat dry
While running in that race called life.

I want to be that gasp of air
That you need to sustain life.
When you try to take those final breaths,
I will be drained from your body slowly.

You say I am the one you crave
I believe I am the one you desire
I want to be the one you need,
But you won't allow me to be your everything.

How to Love like Young Werther

Amelia Ellis

Make love tangible, and make yourself love.
Let love materialize within you, bring it out of its
metaphysical realm of ethereal smoke and make it
your flesh and blood.

Be thrilled by the ordinary. You will find
the ordinary in others thrilling. Love her mind
and delicate features, but only in extreme detail.
Describe every wrinkle in her face, every eyelash's
movement. Find her lips sweet and red, and her
eyes, pools of innocence and sensuality. Her voice
should be a song that fills you with sublimity, and
every time you caress her hand, let your body quiver
with excitement.

Control your physicality; do not let the
body harm itself or another in a moment of great
passion. Let the emotions that flow inside of you
flow—let them not come as strikes, but as tears; weep
against your unrequited love, and let her weep with
you, and weep all the more. Let your tears mingle
in solidarity, let your hearts open themselves up to
each other, unraveling themselves strand by strand
so they may kiss their sweet fibers together: you can-
not have her any other way.

Speak poetry to one another, but draw her
likeness to find you will never capture her beauty.
Find absence unbearable, but write it not to your
love, write it to a friend capturing the very essence
of your love for her. While you wait for your love
to return, look at nature, consider the lilies of the
field, and produce letters not of obsession, but of
contemplation over the many mysteries of captiva-
tion.

Be melancholy, allow love to destroy you;
be joyful, allow love to warm you. But do not allow
love to kill you, for you will no longer be able to
love.

A Love Affair with Old Hollywood Films

Genevieve Fleckenstein

Perhaps it is the aura of stunning movie stars sharing intense kisses against a sweeping backdrop of orchestration, or the clear depiction of character through melodramatic dialogue. Or, most likely, it is the perfect arrangement of this scene that generates an emblem of Romantic love. In any case, old Hollywood films possess an uncanny way of keeping character and storyline relatable and unaffected, while completely engaging the audience and transporting you into an escapist, dream-like place of picturesque romance.

Granted, not too many old Hollywood romance films are ever 'picturesque'; they come with a siege of burden, struggle, and plain old obstacle, that requires our lovers to triumph against. In this hindrance on the couple's affairs we root for Romantic love to prevail all the more so.

What is Romantic love, exactly? The simple idea of it seems quite far from this post-post-modern reality that we live in. We may equate Romantic love with time, contemplation, rumination even; a slow buildup of an overwhelming stream of catastrophic and blissful emotion. That is not to say that it does not and cannot exist, but the fast pace of our lives practically wrestle against it; or at least against the possibility of ever finding it. I think we like to imagine its presence in our lived experience. If we observe carefully, we may find traces of it in ourselves or in others. Romantic love may certainly lie in the most intimate and individual conceptions of passion and compassion.



The 1939 Leo McCarey film, "Love Affair," (later made into the possibly more famous 1957, "An Affair to Remember") is a beautiful and striking depiction of Romantic love. Sailing the high seas from Europe to New York, Michel Mornat (Charles Boyer) - a notorious playboy, who is on his way to marry an heiress - meets Terry McKay (Irene Dunne) - a young woman kept by her boss and "fiancé". Although both are (almost) tied to another, and are used to a life of "pink champagne," they start a shipboard romance filled with flirtatious talk, soft caresses, and wistful eye gestures.

Fears of being trapped in the public eye stop the entanglement before it ever really starts. However, as old Hollywood fate would have it, a short shore excursion works as the apparatus to unlock the unworldly atmosphere that captivates him and her, and catalyzes their emotions. Although they are certain about their feelings for each other, they are not sure if they could manage a long-term relationship. They agree to meet again atop of the Empire State Building, and then the future will be theirs...

At last, the six months are over and the Empire State Building is already in sight, but fate strikes. Terry - in a hurry to meet Michel - is run over by a car, putting her in a wheelchair. Not knowing if she'll ever walk again, she doesn't want to be a burden for Michel and does not contact him. This break in romance feels like a burden in itself. When they do finally come to meet again, the lovers see each other in a new light. Everything has changed, they cannot deny it. It is despairing.

We witness the lack of flawlessness within our protagonists, but we are told to love the sinner and not the sin, and who does not want to believe that love might have a cathartic effect and bring out the best in us? Of course this "catharsis" has to stand a test, and our couple has to prove that they are changed as individuals to be allowed to become a couple again.

As serious as this sounds and as light as the tone in which the story is told, it is certainly an outstanding and appealing feature of "Love Affair." We are lucky enough to witness the mysterious moment of onscreen chemistry; in the case of Irene and Charles, chemistry based more on gentleness and affection than on wordplay and timing.

"Love Affair" is an emotional rollercoaster, proving to the audience why Terry was and is the woman Michel falls in love with.



Young Love

by Nacre Coleman

I adored
The word Love
Because you used
The word Love
And never confused
The word love
Back then,
Butterflies in my tummy,
When thinking of you
And the things you said to me.

You made me question
The word love
Because you misused
The word love
And slightly confused
The word love
For lust,
Whispering sweet nothings
In my ear
To fulfill your fleshly desires.

You made me Hate
The word Love
Because you abused
The word Love
And I could never use
The word Love
Again,
Without me thinking
About how bad you've hurt me.

How I See It

Amelia Ellis

1

I have no more sense of time,
No more watches, clocks, or shadows.
I have no more—this sense of mine—
No more reason, or logic, or egos.

Je ne suis pas,
Je n'ai pas,
Je ne sais pas,
Mais—
Je t'aime.

Do not hold me back!
My senses blind me.
Oh! tears! Pour forth,
And mock me not!

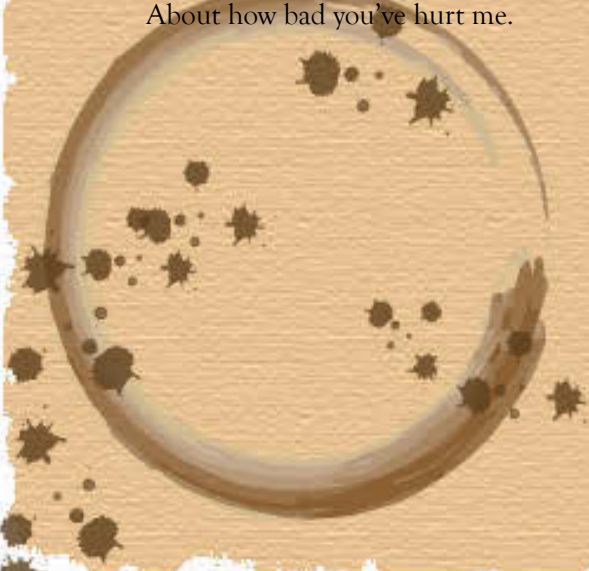
I love you!
I love you.
I love you...

2

I had a dream last night that you were with me
Under my blankets,
Your head on my pillow,
Your hair smelling of the cleanest soap—
The soap you used to wash away my loneliness.

And I awoke to find you
Under my blankets,
Your head on my pillow,
Your hair smelling of the cleanest soap—
The soap I keep in my shower—
The soap we bathed in.

Caress



Valentine's Day in NYC

Love, Light, and Lyrics

Thursday, February 14, 2013 at 4:30 pm
236 East 3rd Street, New York, NY 10009
As part of the One Billion Rising global movement to end violence against women, The Women Worldwide Initiative will host Love, Light & Lyrics at the Nuyorican Poets Cafe on Valentine's Day - a community's call to spread love and end violence. Hosted by Lynx Garcia.
Tickets: \$10

Poetic Romance The Passion Within

Saturday, February 16, 2013 at 6:00 pm
236 East 3rd Street, New York, NY 10009
Your host, Mr. Speaker, will guide you through an evening of Love, Passion, Romance, and Erotic Poetry. There will be roses for the ladies, door prizes, and an open mic. Doors open at 5:30 pm.
Tickets online: \$10
At the door: \$15

Missed Connections

Thursday, February 14, 2013 from 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm
Grand Central Terminal: Vanderbilt Hall
109 E. 42nd St., New York, NY 10170
This Valentine's Day, find your commuter sweetheart amidst the elegant Vanderbilt Hall. Anonymous Craigslist postings on the Missed Connections classifieds are the inspiration for this evening of art, poetry, music and romance. Alan Feuer will recite Craigslist postings verbatim. Acclaimed illustrator Sophie Blackall will share stories of New York's love for her Missed Connections-inspired poster and sign prints of her illustrations and book. Guests can also view the exhibition Grand by Design.
Tickets: \$15 at the door
Advanced tickets: \$10/\$7 members and MTA employees

Food for Thought

Shiyon Mathew

"Love is the delusion that one woman differs from another."

H.L. Mencken

"Love gives itself; it is not bought."

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

"To love is to place our happiness in the happiness of another."

Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibnitz

"The way to love anything is to realize that it might be lost."

Gilbert K. Chesterton

"I never knew how to worship until I knew how to love."

Henry Ward Beecher

"There is no remedy for love but to love more."

Henry David Thoreau

"Life has taught us that love does not consist in gazing at each other but in looking outward together in the same direction."

Saint-Exupery

Submit to *Phoenix* 2013!

Deadlines:

March 20th for written work

March 31st for artwork

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